

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 24, No. 9

September 15, 1956

Whole No. 288

My Remembrances of Gilbert Patten

by James E. Knott



From a photo taken by George French

My acquaintance with the Merriwell Books began back in 1903 when I purchased for 10c in a candy and stationery store in New York City, "Frank Merriwells Chums". This was a Medal Library publication with black borders on the front covers. After reading this book I investigated

further, discovered the Tip-Top Weeklies for 5c which came out every Friday in our neighborhood and which at that time had progressed to the point where Dick Merriwell was co-starring with Frank.

For three years, or until well into 1906, I read all I could of the Merri-

wells, going back to the beginning by means of the Medal Library books which were reprints started in 1902 because of the tremendous popularity of the Weeklies. "Frank Merriwells Chums" which started me off was made up of Tip-Top Weeklies Nos. 5-6-7 and 8, published originally in 1896. Of course I read the Tip-Top Weeklies of my day which covered the latest doings of Frank and Dick. Three years in the life of a youngster is a long time and I read many a page of Gil Patten's writing describing the marvelous feats of these gifted brothers or rather half-brothers.

There were many of these nickel weeklies being published back in 1903 by Street & Smith and Frank Tousey. Work & Win, Liberty Boys of 76, Blue and Gray, Nick Carter, Young & Old King Brady, Frank Reade, etc., but I favored Tip-Top for at that age I was sport-minded and Frank and Dick's feats at Baseball, Football, for that matter any sport you could name fascinated me.

The years passed and I outgrew Juveniles but I remembered them and I appreciated the pleasure they had given me. When I was in the early twenties, around 1915, I sent to Street & Smith for the Medal books they were still publishing (Tip-Top Weeklies had folded by that time) and I thought I would read the entire Saga. But the old magic was gone and I soon gave it up.

I doubt if anyone has ever read the entire story of Frank Merriwell. It would mean going through 850 numbers of Tip-Top Weekly started in 1896 and running weekly until 1912. A gigantic task for one writer and also for one reader, Gil Patten wrote all but a very few copies of this tremendous story.

Regarding the above paragraph. To most of the Merriwell readers the 850 numbers of Tip-Top Weekly together with the Medal and New Medal Reprints represented the main history of Frank Merriwell and later on Dick Merriwell. However, as Mr. J. P. Guinon reminds me the stories were continued beyond No. 850—in the 136 numbers of New Tip-Top that followed Tip-Top itself, although with more emphasis on Frank Merriwell, Jr., and then still without a break through 18 issues of Tip-Top Semi-Monthly and the first 9 numbers of Wide Awake Magazine which succeeded Tip-Top Semi-Monthly. The last issue of Wide Awake Magazine containing a Merriwell story was dated April 10, 1916 with which number the continuous run ended. Mr. Guinon makes the point that, as the run began on April 16, 1896 it lasted practically 20 years exactly, although Patten did not write any of these later stories.

Mr. Guinon further informs me that in 1929 and 1930, Patten did come up with a revival of the Merriwells that,

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Assistant Editor

Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass.

Asst. Ed. Photography—Charles Duprez, 228 Larch Lane, Smithtown, L.I., N.Y.

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as Mr. Guinon states "were as good as anything he ever wrote on the subject and which ended abruptly and without explanation after about six months of continuous appearance. He also had three Merriwell tales in Sport Story Magazine during 1927." I was unaware of these facts until Mr. Guinon brought them to my attention and Gil Patten never happened to mention them to me.

Now to return to my personal experience with the Merriwells and Gil Patten.

Years passed away and brought me to 1937 when I discovered to my surprise that the author of the Merriwell books was still living and was in the same city as myself—New York. As it happened I had become a sort of collector at that time, motivated by sentimental reasons. I was collecting first editions of the authors who had entertained me so well in my childhood. Harry Castlemon, Horatio Alger, Jr., Edward S. Ellis, G. A. Henty and of course Gil Patten whose Tip-Top Weekly I was trying to assemble, the entire 850 numbers.

It was not too surprising that Gil Patten was alive in 1937. He had started the Merriwell stories when he was 29 which would make him 70 years old when I first met him. Our first meeting took place at luncheon at the New Weston Hotel on April 15, 1937.

We had, at least I had, a most interesting talk at this luncheon. I found him to be a tall erect gentleman with thick gray hair, extremely pleasant in manner and a good conversationalist. He answered my questions readily enough but until I convinced him that I was quite serious in my attempt to collect the original Tip-Tops and that my boyhood recollection of his Merriwell stories were still strong in my memory he seemed to shy away from the discussion of his writing, at first. But convinced of my sincerity and admiration of his work he rapidly warmed up and discussed the Merriwells frankly. He was fully in possession of all his faculties, indeed he was mentally

alert in all respects until his death eight years later. At this first meeting when I questioned him about a certain episode that had lingered strongly in my memory he remarked, "I've forgotten that. There were so many situations that a great number are blank to me now. You know," he added, "this writing was hack work and it had to be ground out in some cases so fast and over such a long time that many incidents are forgotten."

There was nothing of the stuffed shirt about him, no posing and no illusions that he was entitled to literary greatness. He was very likable, modest and with no pretensions as to his career. In fact if anything he seemed to deprecate his marathon stint of writing. He informed me he had started the Merriwell stories in long hand, switched soon to a typewriter and wound up by dictating them to a girl in Maine to whom he paid \$8.00 a week and of her he said, "She was a dandy after she got well into the work. I used to leave all the punctuation to her—in fact I never checked the MSS after dictating." It appeared this \$8.00 a week amanuensis was from Camden, Maine, Gil Patten's home at the time where a great number of the Merriwells were turned out.

This first meeting of ours was followed by another which in turn led to others and within a few months I was on terms of intimacy with him which ripened into a real friendship during the years that Gil Patten remained with us.

When I left New York the following year I carried on quite a correspondence with him. I visited him at his home in Camden and later on he spent a year at New London, Connecticut, where I saw and talked to him often.

During our talks there were many points I never got around to but there were many that I did cover with him.

First of all he resented the fact that the publishers of the Merriwells, Street & Smith, never released to him the pseudonym "Burt L. Standish"

used by them in connection with these stories. He felt that when the Merriwell tales were ended they could have let him take over this name because he wrote under it so many years and because Street & Smith had profited so greatly by it. Of course it was their property he readily admitted, but he believed that he was entitled to it morally if not legally.

During the high point of the Tip-Top Weeklies' circulation, a rival publisher, Frank Tousey, had attempted to lure him away from Street & Smith. Patten wrote for Street & Smith on successive short contracts which had started at \$60.00 a week and at this stage had risen to \$100.00 a week. Tousey offered him \$125.00 a week and what was more important had agreed to open their books to him and pay him a royalty on sales above a certain amount of circulation in addition to this salary. He was anxious to accept this offer and to make the change at the end of his present contract was nearing its expiration. He notified Street & Smith of this and was interviewed by Ormond G. Smith, the head of the firm, and from all accounts a most astute business man.

Smith talked him out of it by stressing their long association together, by meeting the salary jump, by presenting him with an automobile but with no royalties.

Patten told me this had been his last and best chance to break away as the Merriwells were then at their peak of popularity but as he somewhat sadly continued, "He talked me out of Tousey's offer and into another contract. I was always a poor business man. I took the car and signed another contract."

The thought struck me that if he had gone with Tousey at that time he could never have continued with the Merriwells or used the "Burt L. Standish" name, both of which were unquestionably Street & Smith's properties. However he could have written a new series for Tousey far better than the "Frank Manley" stories which Tousey started shortly after-

wards in imitation of the Merriwells and which were far inferior to Gil Patten's work.

He also told me that some time after he started the Merriwell stories they became an obsession with him. Faced with 20,000 words a week, new adventures, new characters, new scenes always ahead of him, he could think of nothing else. His mind was always thinking ahead, and not only his waking hours but his sleep was affected. "I had to stop thinking of Merriwell every hour of the day," he told me. "Once or twice I thought I was going crazy. Finally I did take myself in hand very firmly. I limited my work to the morning hours and after luncheon I banished all thoughts of Merriwell from my mind, took long walks or if the weather was bad I made it a point to see people and talk of other things. This was extremely difficult at first but I gradually accomplished it and I really believe I saved my reason and my job. The mind can do wonders for you if you can control it."

When I visited him at Camden he went to his bookshelves—there were very few books there and no Merriwells that I could see—took down a volume and handed it to me. "I never travelled outside the United States," he said, "yet as you know I took Frank and Dick all over the world. That book you have there lists all the countries, cities, habits of the inhabitants, climate, everything in concise form. It sufficed to enable me to sketch in backgrounds whether the Merriwells were in Europe, Asia, Africa or South America."

Once he mentioned the introduction of Dick Merriwell. This he freely admitted was Street & Smith's idea. Frank had exhausted his college days at Yale. The publishers who had a good thing on their hands sensed that another character closely related to Frank must appear and start things all over again from Prep School. It could not be a son as there was no time for him to grow up. It must be a brother was Street & Smith's decision.

"Impossible," Patten, told them. "Frank is an only son. I have stated that over and over again. I couldn't get away with it."

"Figure it out some way," they said. "It has to be."

He told me it seemed to him at the time impossible but fiction can accomplish miracles. The solution came to him, a half brother, and so Dick appeared all ready or almost ready for action.

I once asked Gil Patten which of his characters was his favorite. He replied instantly, "Cap Wiley." We were in my apartment in New York at the time after having dinner together and after answering he got up and walked to and fro dictating a baseball story in which Wiley had saved the game by a remarkable catch in the ninth inning. Unfortunately I cannot take shorthand like the girl in Maine or I should own an unpublished yarn of Patten's today. At the time he remarked he would like to do a few stories of Wiley even at that late date.

During 1938 I completed my Tip-Top weekly collection and Gil Patten was very pleased and wrote a most gracious note in the first number of the bound volumes. I had the weeklies bound 25 numbers to a volume from No. 1 to No. 850. This collection after his death I presented to the Yale University Library as I thought that was the place where Frank should feel most at home. Apropos of this Gil Patten told me he attended a football game at New Haven some years after he had finished with the Merriwells. Harvard was the opponent and they were giving Yale quite a trimming. To Patten's amusement the crowd took up a chant late in the game, "Send for Frank Merriwell, Send for Frank Merriwell." Evidently the stories were remembered.

I inquired about his contemporary writers. He admired and respected Col. Prentiss Ingraham, a dime novel writer who had led a very adventurous career before taking up the pen. He mentioned him often.

He liked Castlemon's work, but did

not care for Henty and told me he disliked Alger's work. "All the same story," he said but added with a smile, "I used the same plots over again quite often but I had to do so." He mentioned meeting Ellis once and being advised by that writer to "give up fiction and write text books. There's more money in it."

He remembered Frank Munsey the publisher at a club in New York and being told the story of his (Munsey's) success in life which he did not seem to appreciate. After telling me about Munsey he loaned me George Britt's book on Munsey, "Forty Years, Forty Millions".

It will be remembered he attempted to bring back Frank at the age of 50 in a book entitled "Mr. Frank Merriwell." This was in 1941. The failure of this book was a great disappointment to him. Here is a letter from him on this:

Camden, Maine, July 31, 1941

Mr. James E. Knott,
Bristol, N. H.

Dear Mr. Knott:

Not only was the circular advertising Mr. Frank Merriwell cheap and trashy, the publishers apparently did everything else that could be done to kill it. As you know, the book was written last summer. The finished copy was delivered on the 6th of September and the first publication date was set and advertised as October 24. Later it was changed to Nov. 5. But when I reached New York late in September the publishers had made another postponement until the first or second week in Jan. When I protested against the delay I was told that they had printed only 4,000 copies and could not get another printing if the edition sold out before Christmas. After I went to California there was still another postponement until March 4, followed by another until March 15. And it was finally released April 18. All my pleading and protests were unavailing. Bullock's store in Los Angeles had more than a dozen orders before Christmas. None afterwards. The publishers were putting all the efforts into pushing "Out

of the Night" and doing absolutely nothing for my poor book. Every copy that came into California was ordered from dealers who did not have a single copy in stock, and I autographed more than twenty-five copies. There was no distribution and apparently no attempt to make any.

The press notices were more than kind; some were boosts of the finest sort and several reviewers called the book a "must" item. Since coming to Maine eight or ten persons have asked me where they could buy the book. I've been obliged to tell them to send to the publishers. One store in town paid in early October for the delivery of six copies and never was able to find out when they would arrive until they came in the following April. While I was in California the editor for the Alliance Book Corp. and the publicity staff resigned. Oliver La Farge, who wrote "Laughing Boy," then became the editor and a woman named Lillian Lustig was engaged for publicity work, but when I returned to N. Y. late in June La Farge and Miss Lustig were out—and Mrs. Koppell, wife of the president of the company, was trying to do publicity. I could get no satisfaction from Mr. Koppell regarding the failure in distribution. All he would say was, "Why do we get no orders?"

While the publishers certainly did a poor job on the promotion, the truth is that to the former readers of Tip-Top Weekly, and they were still very numerous, this book was disappointing. It did not bring back enough of the old characters, was certainly not in the old Merriwell spirit and really "missed the boat". As his son Barr Patten told me later, "Dad tried to introduce some *risque* situations. He did not know how to write that way."

Unlike his great hero Frank, Gil Patten smoked cigarettes and took an occasional cocktail or highball but never to my knowledge to excess. He did smoke quite a bit.

I do not recall his ever using profane or vulgar language. He did not have to. He could talk very well and

very convincingly without such embellishments.

All in all he was a gracious gentleman, a good friend, and during his later years he faced sorrows and troubles bravely.

While in New London he took ill and his son Barr Patten, who lived with his wife in Vista, California, at the time, insisted that he come out there where he could make his home with him. Gil Patten at first disliked leaving the East where most of his friends were but finally consented and Mrs. Barr Patten came East and took him out there. Just before he left he showed me the final chapter in manuscript of an autobiography he was working on, to be called "Frank Merriwell's Father". However it was a bad time to get this published, the Second World War was on, paper was restricted, publishers were wary and nothing so far has come of it.

Our correspondence continued even after his arrival in California. Here is his last letter to me which shows that he had come to like his new home:

Vista, Calif., Jan. 5, 1945.

Mr. James Edward Knott,
Rocklands,
Bristol, N. H.

Dear Mr. Knott:

Your Christmas card, showing your beautiful home in Bristol, reached me here, where I have been for more than a year. Thank you and Mrs Knott for your thoughtfulness, which is deeply appreciated.

My health is as good as I could expect at my age. This is a marvelous climate for persons with thin blood or poor circulation. Though it is now the winter rainy season, there has yet been no day in which it has rained more than an hour or a little more during daylight hours, and that has happened once or twice. We have had just enough rain at night to make the country the most amazing emerald green. At night the thermometer has not yet fallen below 32 above, and so far we have had only three days when it has not risen above 70 in the shade,

and there have been days when it reached 80. Yesterday I motored with my son over to San Diego, 40 miles away, and the weather was like the "hottest" summer weather we have on the coast of Maine. And as yet not even a spot of snow is to be seen on the distant mountains. They never have snow in Vista. Being within 8 miles of the ocean, from which the wind blows practically every day in summer, 90 degrees above here seems no hotter than 80 used to seem to me in Maine. I have talked with two or three persons who have traveled extensively and finally settled in Vista, who tell me that this is the most perfect climate they have found anywhere, and one man from Boston asserts it must be equal to that of Paradise. Possibly he exaggerates, but now, at 1:30 p.m., the thermometer in the shade outside our front door stands at 75.

I wonder how it stands at Rocklands. Still I don't wonder that you love your beautiful home there.

My failure to get the revised version of my autobiography into the hands of my agent before the threatened paper shortage struck seems to have been the reason for its non-publication. Of course being only small fry myself would prevent a publisher from taking a chance with it, while he might publish the autobiography of somebody of real importance. Anyhow I doubt if it is ever published now, which may be just as well. Guess I was decidedly egotistical to imagine enough persons would buy it to make it a safe venture for a publisher.

I saw your correction in Cummings' Round-up of my error regarding "The Gold of Flat-top Mountain." You are right, Frank Converse wrote the story.

With all good wishes, I remain
Gratefully yours,

He died peacefully in his sleep on Jan. 16, 1945, at the age of 78, just 11 days after the date of the above letter.

There were many questions I failed to ask him. For instance, why asks

Mr. J. P. Guinon, the Merriwell expert of Little Rock, Arkansas, did not Frank take part in the Spanish American War which broke out two years after he made his bow. This War would have furnished Frank with all sorts of opportunities for derring-do, yet the war is not even mentioned in the issues covering that period. I do not know this answer and there are other points which will never be cleared up now.

Gil Patten left one son, Barr Patten, who was brought up in Maine but who had lived for many years in California. Because of my friendship with his father I came to know him well. I hunted with him in Montana during the Fall of 1948. Barr was a big man heavier in build than his father and he tried hard to perpetuate the Merriwells by means of radio and later on T.V. Here is a letter he wrote me regarding a T.V. pilot film: Dear James:

Just a few lines to let you know what is happening to "Merriwell."

The first thirty minute television show has been made and it is a corker.

I spent last Tuesday and Wednesday in Hollywood and watched a portion of the filming. Also saw some of the runs. They took three full days to take the show and in most instances made several takes of the same scene to be sure and have what they want. I happen to know that this one show will cost them at least \$20,000.00.

Briefly; There is a train scene, a hazeing, a couple of fights and a large portion of a baseball game between the Yale freshmen and sophomores. It is all well done and from the opinions that I heard from uninterested sources it should go over with a bang. This of course I am hoping for.

The boy who takes the part of Merry will slay you when you see him. He will also slay the bobby soxers. He is 22 years old and hails from Texas. No accent however. He does not smoke or drink and is really a chunk of a man without being a pretty boy. The boy that plays the

heavy is also a corker. He is 22 years old and has been playing pro baseball.

They had the baseball team of University of Southern California play for the sophomores. This ball club was the conference champions. They all did a swell job.

This is a pilot film to be used for the purpose of securing a sponsor. I do not believe that they are going to have a bit of trouble on that score.

How are you and yours? Well and happy I trust. When are you going to South America?

I will keep you posted as to developments. The publicity should break in the papers all over the country within the next couple of weeks and believe me London and Uhr really have the outlets as well as what it takes.

Maybelle joins with me in sending our best to both Ella and yourself.

Sincerely your friend,
Barr

I liked Barr fully as well as I had his father. He was extremely humorous, an all round good companion, interested in all sports and was proud of his father's work, more so I would say than his father actually was. He only survived his Dad six years, dying after an operation for stomach ulcers on July 18, 1951. So practically my last link with the Patten family has vanished.

It is my hope in this article that I have been able to give some idea of this writer to the readers of the Round-Up. Of course my association with him came late in his life when most of his productive work was over. But I treasure the memory of our many talks together and shall always recall our friendship.

I do not believe that any of the authors of the Nickel Weeklies which played so large a part in the period of the nineties and into the first part of the present century held a higher place or remained so long in the memories of so many people still living today than did Gilbert Patten.

It may appear strange to many but there actually were readers who believed Frank to be a real person. The

following letter is authentic and was sent to Yale University.

Chairman of the Department of English

My dear Chairman:

As a true lover of sports, I have long been intrigued by the legendary reports of your Frank Merriwell.

Do you have an adequate summary in print of his unusual feats and remarkable accomplishments which seem to be legion.

During what years was he a student at Yale? Did he graduate? Presume he won letters in all major sports and no doubt set some outstanding records.

Is Mr. Merriwell living today and from what state did he come from?

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

During recent years articles have appeared in the pages of such newspapers as the New York Herald-Tribune, Boston Post and others, written by such writers as the late Mr. W. O. McGeehan, John Lardner and Red Smith among others. Leading magazines such as Time, Reader's Digest, Saturday Evening Post and Esquire have published articles on Patten and the Merriwell story. The latest I have noticed appeared in American Heritage's February issue of this year where a full page illustration of the cover of No. 251 of the Tip-Top Weekly appears in full color, Bart Hodge shooting an alligator is the subject—See pages within for details.

No other author for his type of writing to my knowledge has received such coverage. He must have contributed a great deal to be so remembered. The word "Americana" covers quite a field but if anything deserves to be included in this category, Frank Merriwell most certainly does. To give the pleasure that Gil Patten gave over so many years to not one but several generations, thousands and thousands of boys, this fact I maintain is proof positive that his life was not lived in vain.

NOTICE

Mr. Denis R. Rogers of 1111 Beaver Hall Hill, Montreal, P. Q., Canada has been working on a listing of Munro's Ten Cent Novels and needs the complete title and author of the following: 113 118 134 137 154 155 157 161 162 164 169 170 173 174 188 189 324 326 328 329 330 337 338 340 341 342 343 345 347 348 349 351 352 353 355 up. Mr. Bragin in his bibliography lists No. 379 as the last number. The completed listing will be published as a supplement to the Round-up. I hope members and subscribers who possess the above numbers will take the trouble to provide the information needed. Let's make it a cooperative effort. Mr. Rogers has done the spade work and has gathered the titles he already has from various sources, such as the Library of Congress, the U. of Minnesota Library, The American Antiquarian Society and many private collectors. Titles can be sent to Mr. Rogers direct or to the Editor who will forward them on. Thank you for your cooperation.

Reminiscent of our old favorite author, Gil Patten, Louis Sobol, in his nostalgic patter "Along the Broadway Beat" sets down his memory of meeting up with Patten one evening at the "Gay Nineties," operated by one Bill Gay.

At this select gathering at the "Gay Nineties" there intermingled such celebrities as Gil Patten (Creator of the Frank and Dick Merriwell immortals); Otis Skinner, Blanche Ring, Minnie Dupree (wonder whether related to our comedian and photographer, the one and only Charles J. Duprez?), Hilda Spong, Christine MacDonald, Mollie Williams and others.

In a show-case famous old paperback dime-novels. On the walls lurid posters of the bygone theatrical era.

The gang got together to warble such old-time ballads as A Bicycle Built for Two, Sidewalks of New York, and so on, at which sessions Al Smith was a frequenter.

Silver dollars studded the bar-room

floor. One could even go over and enjoy himself at the old-time music-box.

Those were the days, you betcha.
—Bob Smeltzer

INTERESTING DIME NOVEL
FACTS

Many dime novel authors were paid little money. Had to turn them out fast. Many got to drinking to keep awake to write.

Some of the dime novel's bad reputation in the 1890's was due to their being sold in places where they played pool and there were lots of hangers-on.

Old Cap Collier, the original great detective, could throw a man twenty feet. His strength was prodigious.

Gilbert Patten took one abortive fling at publishing himself—in 1930 he formed the Gilbert Patten Corporation of New York. He got out just one issue "The Dime Novel" No. 1.

Gilbert Patten wrote a few novels under the pseudonym of Herbert Bellwood in Brave and Bold. One story was "Bound Boy Frank" which had earlier appeared in Beadles Half Dime Library under his own name.

George French's brother knew Frank James and has told George many stories about him. Suffice it to say as we all pretty well know, Frank never talked about his outlaw background.

A grand daughter of Jesse James is now a teller in a Los Angeles Bank, times do change.

Frank James' widow lived until about 1917.

Oll Coomes (Indian story writer) was a great pal of Gilbert Patten and they had many adventures together. Patten told about some of these experiences to George French in Maine.

Reckless Ralph Cummings got out his first paper on dime novels in 1922. Robert Smeltzer was the printer and it was called Cummings and Clark's Flyer. It covered one side of a 6½x7 sheet.

Diamond Dick, the deadly marksman who dropped out of sight for a

quarter of a century after his great exploits, reappeared in 1925 as Dr. Richard Tanner in Norfolk, Nebraska. He was considered the most successful doctor in his county (Cummings had an article on this in one of his early papers).

Lorraine Sheldon, authoress of the My Queen series, often was a ghost writer for authors who got drunk and a dead line had to be met. She was under contract to Street & Smith. She wrote several Do and Dares and some Jesse James Stories besides others. She told George French when he helped her financially. Her old age was spent in some destitution.

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings
Fisherville, Mass.

Fred Lee sends in some bad news, such as Mrs. Willis E. Hurd died May 13th 1956 on a Sunday, and his oldest daughter last year. Willis is 81 years old—better send him a sympathy card, fellers. C. B. Hamilton, of Norway, Maine, also died some time in May, as the executor of the estate notified Fred. God bless both of them, wherever they may be.

John C. Kunzog, 36 Norton Ave., Jamestown 29, N. Y., is still after Liberty Boys of '76 #94 The Liberty Boys Best Blow, or Beating the British at Bennington, also 585 The Liberty Boys and the Yankee Peddler, or Sharp Work at Bennington. John is also after Dan Rice (circus) material as well. John gave the Curator of "The Bennington Museum", Bennington, Vt. two small reprints on the Liberty Boys in Bennington, as he had never seen a Liberty Boys, nor had he ever seen any kind of a nickel novel, so it was a real treat to him to be able to get them, and no doubt, who knows, maybe we can get a member for H. H. Bros. You never can tell, you know.

John also wants Ethan Allen stories too.

John says only us old bucks can recall the thrill of reading this lit-

erature under the following circumstances.

1. In school, with the old thriller nicely tucked in the geography.
2. In the attic or haymow.
3. But for real private, undisturbed reading pleasure—in the old W. C. Most of the younger people nowadays don't know what a W. C. is, an out door house, as they didn't have bath rooms in those days.

Wm. M. Claggett remembers Cape Cod, and Falmouth, Mass., as he used to be advance agent for Barnum and Bailey and other circuses in the old days, Walter S. Main, Sparks Circus. Those were the good old days. It calls back old memories when he received a card from me, from Cape Cod, when I was down there a month or more ago. Bill says he'll never be able to visit those places again as he did in his youth, however, he hopes to be able to take a trip to New York and Boston next year, if things go right, or maybe 2 years, but any way it's worth hoping for, and we all do hope you can make it up this way Pard.

Carl Linville, 972 Windsor St., Cincinnati 6, Ohio, wants the American Heritage (Mag.) Vol. 1 Nos. 1, 4 and 5. They came out in Dec. 1954-June 1955 and Aug. 1955. Carl says it was so good to of bee nable to visit Bob Smeltzer, and wishes he could have stayed longer—he regrets that he was unable to meet up with Charlie Duprez. (There may be another time that you fellows can get together.)

Bob Smeltzer says he sure did get a real surprise when his sister came up and told him an old friend of his was down stairs, and who do you think it was, the one and only Carl Linville and a friend of his, Arthur Shuberg of Salina, Kansas. You see they were World War 1 buddies and had kept up their correspondence and friendship all these years.

Got any good ideas how we can get in a nice lot of new members, fellers? I can't seem to dig out a good idea out of my think box lately, maybe it's a sign of old age creeping

up on me. But any way, send in any thing you think is good, and we'll put it to a test, and see what luck we have. The Roundup lately has been running some real meaty articles and we want to keep it up—I take that back, we've always had good stuff from No. 1 up, but every issue brings in something of interest, in some way or another.

EXCHANGE COLUMN

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